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RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY 9274  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/29/2018

TAGS: [NATO PREL MARR MOPS AF IT](#)

SUBJECT: ISAF: CARETAKER PRODI GOVERNMENT MAY ANNOUNCE  
MINOR INCREASES AT BUCHAREST

REF: A. STATE 19516

[B. ROME 148](#)

[C. ROME 246](#)

Classified By: Acting Political Minister-Counselor Gabriel Escobar for  
Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche to Italian MFA Director for Political-Military Affairs Gianni Bardini on February 27. Bardini explained that the current caretaker government of PM Romano Prodi has no mandate to carry out anything more than basic administrative functions in the run-up to the April 13-14 General Elections and can not undertake major new initiatives before the Bucharest Summit. The GOI has, however, taken note of requests from the U.S. and other allies to come up with new contributions (including the letter from SecDef Gates to MOD Parisi), and is exploring possibilities for "small personnel increases" in the area of OMLTs and Carabinieri police training that would not require separate parliamentary authorization (Ref B). The current Parliament was technically dissolved on February 6 and only meets for essential business (it passed the annual decree refinancing Italy's military missions abroad -- including Afghanistan -- on February 26).

[1](#)2. (S/NF) When asked whether a future Italian government would show more flexibility in ISAF deployments, Bardini replied that neither of the most likely post-election combinations (a Center-Right Berlusconi government or a Center-Left Veltroni government) would face the constraints that Prodi's far-left coalition partners imposed upon his Afghanistan policy. (Note: On February 26 Veltroni told the Ambassador that Italy would do more in ISAF if he is elected (Ref C)) Bardini cautioned that this would not necessarily translate into large troop increases or waived caveats, because the Italian military has reached the operational and budgetary limits of its overseas deployability at about 9,000 troops. Italian long-term military planning continues to focus on the possibility of consolidating all of its troops in RC-West, which would require another ally to shoulder the burden of Italy's rotating command in RC-Capital.  
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